

Creating SMART Goals

Specific

Be clear as to what exactly you want to accomplish. For example, change 'study more' to 'study my math materials.'

Measurable

Define a specific measurement so you will know when you have achieved what you set out to do. For example, expand on 'study my English vocabulary' to 'study my vocabulary at least 1 hour each weeknight.'

Action-Oriented

Make sure that the goal reflects you actually doing something. So, expand in the previous statement by saying, 'review the previous day's notes and complete all associated exercises for math materials, spending at least one hour each weeknight' or 'create flashcards with vocabulary words and study them 15 minutes each weeknight.'

Realistic

Make the goal challenging, yet realistic. For instance, if you know that on Wednesday nights you have soccer practice that will routinely keep you from spending one hour on your homework, make sure you reflect this in your goal. For example, 'review the previous day's notes and complete all associated exercises for my math materials, spending at least one hour each weeknight except Wednesday, when I will 30 minutes after practice.'

Time and Resource-Constrained

Define the timeframe for goal accomplishment and what resources you will need to accomplish the goal. For example, 'accomplish this goal by the end of next month, using the library as my study location.'

Effective goals are also manageable goals. This means that a goal like 'complete my POW within two days after it has been distributed' needs to be broken down into smaller pieces. So for instance, this large goal is made up of the following smaller goal pieces:

- Meet with my teacher within 24 hours to ask for clarification on question.
- Ask my parents for help within 2 days of POW being distributed.
- Complete the POW by the third day.

- Hand rough-draft into Ms. DeCardy at least two days before POW is due for feedback.

Develop a Daily Plan

Armed with a personal vision and concrete goals, you are ready to tackle your day-to-day tasks. Most of us refer to the way we accomplish our daily tasks as time management. This is really a misleading term. It implies that you have the ability to control time, when in reality, time marches on at a steady pace regardless of what you do. What you really need to do is learn to manage yourself in the time that you have available to you. Below are some tips to make the most of your time.

- Spend the last 15 minutes of every night or the first 15 minutes of every morning reviewing what you need to accomplish. This small amount of time can save you hours later in the day, ensuring you have the necessary information, materials and plans in place to effectively go about your day. Reflect on your goals, making sure you have considered these in planning your day.
- Review your to-do list daily. Make sure the things on your list are things that are important in accomplishing your goals. Watch that you don't fill up your to-do list with things that help other people get ahead at the expense of accomplishing your goals.
- Know when you are 'at your best.' For some it's first thing in the morning, for others it's right before bed. Use this time to accomplish your most challenging tasks so you can focus your best energy on it.
- Make sure you set aside enough time to get done what needs to get done. Don't sell yourself short. It's better to block out two hours to study for your math test and then find out you only need one than it is to have only set aside one hour and find you need two! Remember that learning is the key reason you are at school. Set aside enough time to make the most of your studies and make this time focused time.
- Define one specific place to keep track of your homework assignments and test dates for all your classes. This prevents you from flipping through each class' notebook every night to see what you need to do for the next day.